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SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS DAY 2005 IN THE PHILIPPINES

REF: STATE 202764

1. (U) This message is in response to reftel requesting descriptions of any planned Human Rights Day (December 10) activities by local individuals and groups or embassy personnel.

2. (U) Post is commemorating Human Rights Day and Human Rights Week (December 4-10) with a number of human rights-related activities on or around these dates. These activities are a part of Mission's ongoing efforts to promote democracy and human rights in the Philippines. The Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines (CHR) and various Philippine human rights NGOs are also planning activities to mark this week/day. The activities are detailed in the following paragraphs.

#### Embassy Events

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3. (U) On or before December 9, PAS will officially launch the "Democracy Summer Fest" program scheduled to take place from April-June 2006. This program, funded under the Human Rights and Democracy Small Grants Fund, aims to promote human rights and democracy among young Filipinos aged 18-21. To mark Human Rights Day, PAS will distribute media releases about the program and send letters to colleges and universities inviting them to nominate potential participants. The release will be posted on the embassy's public website (<http://usembassy.state.gov/posts/rpl/wwwhmai n.html>) and on the website of the U.S. Virtual Consulate in Davao (<http://www.usvirtualconsulatedavao.org.ph>). Post will also place on both websites messages from the Secretary and/or President Bush marking Human Rights Day, when they are issued.

4. (U) Post is also organizing a series of speaking events to coincide with the start of Human Rights Week. Ms. Goli Ameri, U.S. Senior Adviser to the 60th Session of the U.N. General Assembly and U.S. Public Delegate to the 61st Session of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, will speak to select audiences on the topic of democracy and human rights:

-- December 1: Roundtable Discussion on "Human Rights: Democracy and the Rule of Law." The audience will be representatives from human rights NGOs and advocacy groups;  
-- December 2: Roundtable Discussion with the Commission on Human Rights on "The U.S. Proposal to Replace the U.N. Commission on Human Rights with a Human Rights Council." The audience will be the Commissioners, Directors, and staff of the CHR;  
-- December 2: Roundtable Discussion at the National Defense College of the Philippines on U.N. Reform and the Proposed Human Rights Council. The audience will be some 60 students and faculty members of the college.

5. (U) Post will host an online chat session on human rights on the Davao Virtual Consulate website before or immediately after December 10 in honor of Human Rights Day.

6. (U) During the week, Emboffs will also participate in events being held by local groups to mark Human Rights Week and Day (paras 7-9).

#### Local Activities

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7. (U) The CHR is conducting a series of events around the country on the theme "Human Rights: Respect, Promote, Enforce," including a seminar on human rights action planning by local governments, a conference on capacity building in the juvenile justice system, a forum on the death penalty, a program (conducted in multiple locations) for groups that work with internally displaced persons, and the launch of a human rights film festival in partnership with the Quezon City government in Metro Manila.

8. (U) As part of its celebration of "National Human Rights Consciousness Week," mandated by Republic Act 9201, the CHR is honoring human rights activists Haydee Yorac, the late Chair of the Presidential Commission on Good Governance, and Sister Mariani Dimaranan, former Chair of Task Force Detainees of the Philippines, at a ceremony on December 7 at the House of Representatives. The ceremony will include the

inauguration of a human rights resource center, named after Yorac, in the House -- proposed in House Resolution No. 1002 and approved by the Committee on Human Rights on November 21.

19. (U) Some of the other activities planned by local NGOs are:

- December 4: National Day of Prayer for the Disappeared, Families of Victims of Involuntary Disappearance (FIND);
- December 5: Launch of the Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (PAHRA) website;
- December 5: Forum and press conference on disappeared persons, Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP);
- December 6: Rally by relatives of disappeared persons at Congress, TFDP;
- December 10: 57th Human Rights Day Rally at Plaza Miranda in Manila, PAHRA;
- December 10: Rally/Parade for "Celebrating Pride and Rights" in Malate, Manila, PAHRA;
- December 12: Forum on the Philippine human rights situation, Philippine Working Group for an ASEAN Human Rights Mechanism.

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